

The Role of Family Social Support in Restoring Social Functioning among Child Victims in Conflict with the Law

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ABSTRACT

Children in conflict with the law as victims are vulnerable to psychosocial problems, including fear, shame, social withdrawal, and low self-confidence, which may impair their social functioning. This study examines forms of family social support and their contribution to restoring the social functioning of child victims in Bengkulu City, Indonesia. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Nine informants participated, comprising three child victims, four family members, one social worker, and one psychologist. Data were analyzed through open coding, categorization, source triangulation, and thematic interpretation based on the social support dimensions of Sarafino and Smith and the social functioning indicators of the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs. Findings indicate that emotional support fostered feelings of safety and confidence, informational support enhanced understanding of legal processes, instrumental support facilitated access to daily needs and services, and appraisal support strengthened self-acceptance. Comprehensive family support was associated with gradual restoration of social functioning, whereas inconsistent support hindered recovery. The study contributes by identifying how specific dimensions of family social support promote family-based rehabilitation and social reintegration of child victims in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

Children occupy a strategic position in national development because they ensure the continuity of family, community, and national life. Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection, as amended by Law Number 35 of 2014, defines a child as an individual under 18 years of age, including children in the womb. Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System recognizes three categories of children in conflict with the law: offenders, victims, and witnesses. This categorization is legally important; however, it is insufficient to explain the distinct psychosocial needs of each group. Child victims, in particular, require responses that differ from those provided to child offenders: they need safety, psychosocial recovery, protection from stigma, and support to rebuild their everyday social roles.

The annual report of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2025) highlights the need to strengthen local service institutions, professional personnel, and adequate funding to ensure that children involved in legal processes, including victims, receive optimal treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration. At the regional level, the Office of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning of Bengkulu Province (2025) recorded child victims and offenders involved in legal processes as groups requiring special attention. These data reinforce the relevance of Bengkulu City as the research location, considering that the city serves as the administrative center of the province where the coordination of child protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration services remains a priority. Furthermore, national crime statistics (BPS, 2025) indicate that children's involvement in legal processes continues to be an issue requiring systematic attention.

Focusing on child victims is essential because their needs differ fundamentally from those of offenders or witnesses. After receiving professional assistance from social workers or psychologists, child victims generally return to their family environments. Consequently, the family becomes the most immediate and sustainable setting for recovery. However, previous studies also warn that family support should not automatically be assumed to be positive (Hua, 2023; Abela et al., 2025). In several cases, families may instead become sources of

psychological pressure through blaming attitudes, emotional silence, overprotection, authoritarian communication, or a lack of sensitivity toward the child's psychosocial needs. This dual possibility makes family social support an important subject for empirical exploration.

Social functioning is defined as the ability of individuals, families, groups, and communities to fulfill basic needs and rights, perform social roles, and cope with problems in daily life (Kemensos RI, 2019). For child victims, impaired social functioning may manifest in difficulties returning to school, reluctance to interact with peers or neighbors, excessive dependence on parents, emotional instability, and reduced problem-solving capacity. Therefore, restoring the social functioning of child victims requires more than merely resolving legal processes; it also requires relational, psychosocial, and practical support within the child's daily environment.

Social support theory explains how assistance from significant others protects individuals from the negative consequences of stressful events (Sarafino & Smith, 2011). Sarafino and Smith distinguish four primary forms of support: (1) emotional support, which provides empathy, affection, and a sense of security; (2) informational support, which helps individuals understand situations and possible solutions; (3) instrumental support, which provides tangible assistance or services; and (4) appraisal support, which strengthens self-esteem through recognition, encouragement, and positive feedback. In the context of child victims in conflict with the law, these four forms of support can be conceptually linked to three indicators of social functioning: fulfillment of basic needs, problem-solving ability, and the performance of social roles.

Previous studies demonstrate that family conflict and poor parent-child relationships increase children's vulnerability to depression and weak emotional regulation (Hua, 2023); (Huang et al., 2025); (Abela et al., 2025), whereas responsive family interactions contribute to adaptive adjustment. Research on the protection of child victims of sexual exploitation also emphasizes the importance of coordinated support systems and safe environments for victims (Lu et al., 2025). In the educational context, Hanna (2025) shows that tensions between school discipline and children's rights may complicate victims' reintegration. Moran & Taylor (2022) study on prosocial

behavior highlights the importance of developing positive identities among children exposed to conflict. Family support in the Indonesian context has also been discussed by Saputri et al. (2019) as well as Maslihah (2011), both of whom identified a positive correlation between social support and children's academic and social adjustment.

Nevertheless, studies specifically examining the mechanisms through which each type of family social support contributes to the restoration of the social functioning of child victims in conflict with the law within the Indonesian context remain very limited. Most existing studies discuss social support in general terms without mapping the specific pathways between dimensions of support and indicators of social functioning. This constitutes the research gap addressed by the present study.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining family social support for child victims in conflict with the law in Bengkulu City. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to map the specific pathways between each dimension of family social support and concrete indicators of social functioning within the context of family-based rehabilitation in Indonesia, a relationship that has rarely been explored empirically at the local level. The research question addressed is: How do families provide social support, and how does such support contribute to restoring the social functioning of child victims in conflict with the law? Accordingly, this study aims to describe and analyze the forms, variations, and mechanisms of family social support in restoring the social functioning of child victims.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the forms of family social support in restoring the social functioning of child victims in conflict with the law in Bengkulu City. A qualitative design was selected because the study focused on subjective experiences, family interaction patterns, meanings attached to support, and the gradual processes through which children resumed their social roles after experiencing victimization (Sugiyono, 2019).

The study was conducted in Bengkulu City in 2021 at the homes of child victims who were receiving assistance from the City Social Service, as well as at the offices of professional institutions where social workers and psychologists provided support services. Bengkulu City was selected because the 2024 administrative data of Bengkulu Province identified child victims and offenders involved in legal processes as groups requiring protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and because family-based rehabilitation practices were actively implemented at the city level.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the child recovery process. The study involved nine informants: three child victims (C1–C3), four family members (F1–F4), one social worker (SW1), and one psychologist (PSY1). The child victims ranged in age from 7 to 15 years and came from diverse case backgrounds. Family members consisted of parents or guardians who were actively involved in the recovery process. The number of informants was considered sufficient because the interviews had reached thematic saturation (data saturation), meaning that subsequent interviews confirmed already established categories without generating substantially new dimensions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To protect confidentiality, personal identities, case details, addresses, and exact ages were not disclosed; all informants were coded.

Table 1. Informant profile and contribution to the data

Code	Informan Category	Relation to The Case	Main Contribution to Data
C1-C3	Child Victims	Children in conflict with law	Experiences of fear, withdrawal, family support, basic needs, problem solving, and social roles
F1-F4	Family Members	Parents or close family members of child victims	Forms of emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support provided at home
SW1	Social Worker	Professional assisting the child and family	Assessment of child recovery needs, family support patterns, and referral processes
PSY1	Psychologist	Professional providing psychosocial perspective	Explanation of trauma responses, emotional recovery, and family communication needs

Source: Data from the Study on Social Support for Children in Conflict with the Law

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) observation of interactions between children and their families in everyday contexts; (2) semi-structured in-depth interviews using interview guides tailored to each group of informants; and (3) documentation studies of social service records. Interviews with child victims were conducted with great caution: questions began with general and non-threatening topics before gradually moving toward experiences of support and recovery. Children were not forced to disclose traumatic details; they were given full freedom to stop, refuse to answer, or terminate the interview at any time. Interviews with family members, social workers, and psychologists were used to triangulate the children’s narratives and to understand the recovery process from multiple perspectives.

Ethical safeguards were strictly implemented because this study involved vulnerable child participants. Written consent was obtained from parents or guardians, and verbal assent was obtained from the children using age-appropriate language. All informants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time. Identities were replaced with codes. The researcher avoided questions that could potentially trigger retraumatization and coordinated with psychologists whenever psychological discomfort emerged during data collection.

The analytical framework combined the social support theory of Sarafino and Smith (2011) with the social functioning indicators developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs (2019). The four dimensions of support were operationalized as analytical variables, while the three indicators of social functioning served as measures of recovery. The combination of these frameworks enabled the analysis to move beyond merely describing forms of support toward explaining the mechanisms underlying the recovery process.

Table 2. Analytical Framework

Concept	Dimension/ Indicators	Operational Focus in This Study
Family support	social Emotional Support	Empathy, affection, acceptance, listening, comfort, and emotional safety
Family support	social Informational Support	Advice, explanation, legal-process information, referrals, and guidance

Family support	social	Instrumental Support	Material aid, accompaniment, daily assistance, and practical services
Family support	social	Appraisal Support	Praise, recognition, encouragement, approval, and positive feedback
Social Functioning		Fulfillment of basic needs	Food, clothing, shelter, schooling, personal needs, and sense of safety
Social Functioning		Problem Solving ability	Understanding problems, choosing responses, asking for help, and making decisions
Social Functioning		Social Roles	Roles as family member, student, friend, neighbor, and community member

Source: Adapted from the social support theory of Sarafino and Smith (2011) and the social functioning indicators developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs (2019)

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the interview and observation notes were read repeatedly to identify significant statements related to family support and social functioning. Second, open coding was conducted by labeling segments of data that referred to emotional responses, advice, practical help, appreciation, needs fulfillment, problem solving, and social roles. Third, codes were grouped into categories based on the analytical framework while still allowing new patterns to emerge from the data. Fourth, themes were interpreted across informants by comparing the experiences of children, family members, and professionals. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, comparison between interview and observation data, peer discussion among researchers, and reflexive notes to reduce subjective bias.

3. Results And Discussion

The findings are presented in two main sections. The first section (3.1.1–3.1.4) describes the four forms of family social support received by child victims based on field data. The second section (3.1.5–3.1.7) analyzes how such support contributes to three aspects of social functioning: the fulfillment of basic needs, problem-solving ability, and the performance of social roles. This structural separation clarifies the conceptual distinction between support as input provided by the family and social functioning as the outcome experienced by the child.

3.1. Result

3.1.1 Emotional Support

Emotional support was reflected in the family's efforts to maintain the child's emotional stability, provide affection, express empathy, and create a safe environment following traumatic experiences. Two families (C1 and C2) demonstrated relatively strong emotional support through attentive communication, patient responses to emotional changes, and willingness to accompany the child in daily activities. These families consistently listened without judgment and reassured the children that the incident did not diminish their value or position within the family.

Children who received consistent emotional support were more likely to demonstrate gradual improvement in expressing their feelings and rebuilding self-confidence. They became more willing to communicate with family members, return to daily routines, and reduce avoidant behavior. In contrast, the child who experienced emotional distance from the family (C3) tended to withdraw further. This difference indicates that emotional support is not merely an expression of affection, but also a recovery mechanism that actively fosters a sense of safety and reduces feelings of shame.

"Ibu saya tidak pernah menyalahkan saya. Setiap kali saya menangis, dia memeluk saya dan bilang bahwa saya tidak bersalah. Itu yang membuat saya berani keluar kamar lagi."

(My mother never blamed me. Every time I cried, she hugged me and told me that it was not my fault. That was what made me brave enough to leave my room again)

"Kami memang tidak tahu harus berbuat apa di awal. Tapi kami putuskan untuk selalu ada di sampingnya, tidak membahas kejadian itu kalau dia tidak mau, dan terus menunjukkan bahwa kami sayang dia."

(At first, we did not know what to do. But we decided to always stay by her side, avoid discussing the incident if she did not want to, and continue showing that we love her)

These statements illustrate that emotional support functions as a protective and restorative mechanism in the recovery process of child victims. The absence of blame, the presence of empathy, and consistent expressions of affection helped the children regain a sense of security and self worth after experiencing traumatic events. At the same time, the family's decision to respect the child's emotional boundaries while remaining emotionally available reflects a supportive communication pattern that reduces psychological pressure. Such conditions enabled the children to gradually rebuild trust, reduce social withdrawal, and regain the confidence necessary to re engage in everyday social interactions.

3.1.2. Informational Support

Informational support consisted of explanations, advice, referrals, and guidance that helped children understand their situation, the assistance available to them, and the ongoing legal process. Families who actively explained the stages of legal proceedings and possible next steps helped reduce the children's confusion and anxiety. In these families, information was not delivered as a form of pressure, but rather as guidance that enabled children to feel a greater sense of control over their situation.

However, informational support was not distributed equally among the three families. One family (C3) tended to assume that the child was sufficiently independent and capable of seeking information on their own, resulting in limited discussion about legal and psychosocial processes. This assumption left the child less prepared to face formal procedures and intensified feelings of helplessness. These findings indicate that informational support is most effective when delivered dialogically, adjusted to the child's developmental stage, and communicated with emotional sensitivity.

"Ayah saya menjelaskan satu per satu apa yang akan terjadi di kantor polisi dan pengadilan. Jadi saya tidak terlalu kaget dan tidak merasa sendirian waktu menjalaninya."

(My father explained step by step what would happen at the police station and in court. So I was not too shocked and did not feel alone while going through it.)

*"Kami mendapatkan informasi dari pekerja sosial tentang hak-hak anak korban, lalu kami sampaikan kepada anak kami dengan bahasa yang mudah dipahami. Itu membantunya merasa tidak tersesat."
(We received information from the social worker about the rights of child victims, and then explained it to our child in simple language. That helped her feel less lost)*

These statements demonstrate that informational support plays an important role in reducing uncertainty and strengthening children's psychological readiness during legal and recovery processes. Clear explanations from parents and the translation of professional information into language that children can easily understand helped the children feel accompanied, informed, and emotionally supported. Rather than merely transferring information, families acted as mediators who interpreted complex legal and social situations in ways that were less intimidating for the child. This process contributed to a greater sense of control, reduced fear toward formal procedures, and supported the child's ability to cope with stressful experiences more adaptively.

3.1.3 Instrumental Support

Instrumental support took the form of tangible assistance, including the fulfillment of daily needs, transportation to school or service institutions, accompaniment during legal processes, and help with household responsibilities. Two families (C1 and C2) provided intensive practical assistance, particularly during the early stages of recovery when the children were still reluctant to interact with the outside environment.

Instrumental support was also reflected in the family's willingness to connect the child with professionals such as social workers and psychologists. This form of support held particular significance because the children did not have to face formal procedures alone. In the family with weaker support (C3), the child tended to handle practical problems independently, not because the child was fully capable, but because family members were unaware of the hidden burdens being carried by the child.

"Setiap kali ada jadwal menemui pekerja sosial atau psikolog, ibu saya selalu menemani. Tidak pernah saya pergi sendiri."

(Whenever there was a schedule to meet the social worker or psychologist, my mother always accompanied me. I never went alone)

"Dengan segala keterbatasan yang kami miliki, kami berusaha untuk memenuhi semua kebutuhan termasuk sekolahnya, namun hanya semampu usahak kami dalam pemenuhannya. Kami juga mengantar jemputnya karena kami khawatir dia tidak mau berangkat sendiri."

(Despite all our limitations, we tried to provide for all of her needs, including her schooling, although only to the best of our ability. We also took her to and from school because we were worried she would not want to go by herself.)

These statements indicate that instrumental support serves not only as practical assistance but also as a form of emotional reassurance for child victims. The consistent presence of family members during meetings with professionals and daily activities helped children feel protected and accompanied throughout the recovery process. In addition, the family's efforts to continue fulfilling educational and daily needs despite economic limitations demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the child's stability and continuity of life. Such support reduced the burden experienced by the children, minimized feelings of isolation, and enabled them to gradually regain confidence in engaging with their social environment

3.1.4 Appraisal Support

Appraisal support was expressed through praise, verbal encouragement, recognition of progress, and appreciation for the child's positive efforts. Compared to the other three forms of support, appraisal support appeared to vary the most among families. Some family members (F1, F2) explicitly expressed pride and provided verbal encouragement, while others (F3, F4) conveyed appreciation more indirectly through actions such as preparing the child's favorite food or allowing activities the child enjoyed.

Appraisal support became particularly important when children began attempting to return to previous activities such as attending school, helping with household tasks, or interacting with

peers. Recognition from family members helped prevent children from defining themselves solely as victims, encouraged them to view recovery as a possible process, and contributed to the development of a more positive self-concept.

"Setiap kali saya mau mencoba sesuatu walau masih takut seperti pergi ke sekolah atau bermain dengan teman, orang tua saya bilang mereka bangga. Itu membuat saya mau mencoba lagi."

(Whenever I tried to do something, even though I was still afraid, like going to school or playing with friends, my parents told me they were proud of me. That made me want to try again)

"Kami selalu memberi tahu dia bahwa dia kuat dan mampu. Kalau ada kemajuan sekecil apa pun, kami sudah berbangga bersama."

(We always told her that she was strong and capable. Even the smallest progress became something we celebrated together.)

These statements show that appraisal support contributed to strengthening the children's confidence and motivation during the recovery process. Expressions of pride, recognition, and encouragement from family members validated the children's efforts and reinforced their sense of capability despite lingering fear and uncertainty. By acknowledging even small achievements, families created a positive environment that encouraged children to continue engaging in social and daily activities. This form of support also helped children develop a more positive self-image, shifting their identity from being solely victims toward individuals who were capable of growth and recovery.

3.1.5. Family Support and The fulfillment of basic needs

The fulfillment of basic needs included food, clothing, shelter, school necessities, personal needs, and a sense of security. The findings indicate that all children were fully dependent on their families for the fulfillment of these needs. This dependence did not merely reflect weakness, but rather represented a developmental stage of childhood and a natural response to psychosocial vulnerability following victimization.

Emotional and instrumental support were closely interconnected within this indicator. Emotional support created the

sense of security needed for children to continue their daily routines, while instrumental support ensured that material needs and services were adequately provided. When families were responsive, children were more likely to perceive the home as a place of protection. Conversely, when families were less attentive, the fulfillment of physical needs alone did not necessarily result in psychosocial security.

"Ibu selalu berusaha memenuhi kebutuhan yang saya butuhkan, walau belum terpenuhi semua karena keterbatasan. Tapi yang paling penting adalah saya merasa aman, tidak takut pulang ke rumah."

(My mother always tried to provide everything I needed, even though not all of it could be fulfilled because of our limitations. But the most important thing was that I felt safe and was not afraid to come home)

This statement illustrates that, for child victims, the meaning of support extends beyond material assistance to include emotional security and comfort within the family environment. Although the family faced economic limitations, the child still perceived the home as a safe space because of the mother's care and consistent presence. This finding suggests that a sense of safety and emotional acceptance can play a more significant role in restoring social functioning than the complete fulfillment of material needs alone.

3.1.6. Family Support and Problem-solving ability

Problem-solving ability refers to the child's capacity to understand situations, choose appropriate responses, seek help, and make decisions. The children in this study still required substantial family guidance in this aspect. Some children attempted to handle problems independently; however, such independence was often accompanied by withdrawal, silence, and a limited understanding of risks.

Informational and instrumental support played a crucial role in strengthening this capacity. Families who actively guided the children helped them identify whom to contact, what steps to take, and how to respond to difficult situations. However, it is important to note that excessively protective family guidance could also be

counterproductive; excessive control hindered the development of the child's autonomy, whereas supportive and empowering guidance encouraged children to gradually learn how to solve problems independently.

"Awalnya saya tidak tahu harus melapor ke mana kalau ada masalah. Tapi ibu saya bilang, 'Kalau ada apa-apa, cerita dulu ke ibu. Nanti kita cari jalan bersama.' Itu membuat saya lebih berani."

(At first, I did not know where to report problems if something happened. But my mother said, 'If anything happens, tell me first. Then we will find a solution together.' That made me feel braver)

"Kalau ada tekanan dari luar, misalnya omongan tetangga, kami duduk bersama dan pikirkan bagaimana menghadapinya tanpa melibatkan anak terlalu dalam pada hal-hal yang belum siap dia tanggung."

(When there was pressure from outside, such as gossip from neighbors, we sat together and thought about how to deal with it without involving the child too deeply in matters they were not yet ready to handle)

"informan korban psda saat bimbingan konseling memang memberikan respon yang baik terhadap keluarga, dukungan keluarga berpeberpen penuh dalam respon informan terhadap kasus yang menimpanya."

(During counseling sessions, the child informant showed positive responses toward the family, as family support played a full role in shaping the informant's response to the case they experienced.)

These statements indicate that family guidance helped children feel more confident and supported when facing difficult situations. Through open communication, shared decision-making, and emotional reassurance, families became an important source of problem-solving support. At the same time, the involvement of the family during counseling strengthened the child's coping process and encouraged more adaptive responses toward the traumatic experience.

3.1.7 Social Support and Social Roles

Children's social roles were observed through their ability to function as family members, students, friends, neighbors, and members of the community. In general, child victims were more capable of performing roles within the family environment than in the broader social environment. Some children assisted with household tasks and communicated with close relatives, yet remained reluctant to interact with neighbors or peers due to feelings of shame, fear, or perceived stigma.

The restoration of social roles was highly dependent on family support as well as the attitudes of the surrounding environment. Families who actively protected children from stigma while gradually encouraging social participation helped children rebuild their self-confidence. Conversely, silence, blaming attitudes, or negative labeling from family members intensified isolation. These findings confirm that restoring social functioning is not merely an individual process; it requires a safe and supportive relational environment.

"Sekarang saya sudah mau pergi ke sekolah lagi, meski awalnya takut diomongin teman. Orang tua saya yang menemani sampai saya berani masuk sendiri."

(Now I am willing to go back to school, although at first I was afraid that my friends would talk about me. My parents accompanied me until I was brave enough to go in by myself)

"Anak kami mulai mau membantu di dapur dan bicara dengan nenek. Itu perkembangan besar karena sebelumnya dia tidak mau keluar kamar sama sekali."

(Our child has started helping in the kitchen and talking with her grandmother. That is a major improvement because previously she did not want to leave her room at all)

These statements demonstrate that family support played an important role in encouraging children to gradually re-engage in social activities and daily responsibilities. The presence and encouragement of parents helped reduce fear and build the confidence needed to return to school and interact with others. In addition, small changes in participation within the household

reflected meaningful progress in the child's social recovery process, particularly after periods of isolation and withdrawal.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that family social support contributes to the restoration of the social functioning of child victims through four interrelated mechanisms, each of which operates through a distinct pathway.

First, emotional support creates a sense of psychological security. For child victims, safety is not limited to physical protection, but also includes feelings of acceptance, the absence of blame, and emotional companionship. This mechanism is consistent with the findings of Abela et al. (2025) and Hua (2023), which indicate that family conflict and poor parent-child interactions can worsen children's emotional regulation, whereas supportive interactions strengthen adaptive adjustment. The findings of Huang et al. (2025) are also relevant, as caregivers' trust in the social environment influences children's depressive symptoms, confirming that the emotional climate within the family constitutes a significant protective factor. In this study, emotional support functioned not only as emotional comfort but also as a stabilizing mechanism that enabled children to gradually re-engage with their surroundings. Children who consistently received empathy and reassurance from family members appeared more capable of expressing emotions openly, reducing withdrawal behaviors, and rebuilding trust in interpersonal relationships. Conversely, emotional distance and silence within the family intensified feelings of shame and isolation. This indicates that emotional support shapes the child's interpretation of the traumatic experience itself. When the family communicates acceptance and protection, the child is more likely to perceive the experience as survivable rather than defining their entire identity.

Second, informational support facilitates understanding and reduces uncertainty. Child victims frequently experience confusion regarding what has happened, what will happen next, and how others may perceive them. Explanations provided by family members and professionals help children understand the situation in a non-threatening manner. This form of support also connects families with

formal child protection systems, in line with the findings of Lu et al. (2025), which emphasize the importance of coordination between informal support and formal services in child protection. The findings of this study further reveal that informational support contributes to the development of cognitive readiness among children. Children who received clear explanations regarding legal procedures, available services, and possible outcomes demonstrated lower levels of fear toward institutional processes. Informational support therefore functioned not only as knowledge transfer, but also as a process of reducing uncertainty and restoring the child's sense of control. In contrast, limited communication within the family left some children to interpret situations independently, often resulting in confusion, excessive anxiety, and avoidance of formal procedures. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of informational support depends heavily on how information is communicated. Information delivered through emotionally sensitive and age-appropriate dialogue was more likely to strengthen coping capacity than information conveyed in rigid or overly formal ways.

Third, instrumental support functions as practical protection. Assistance with daily routines, schooling, access to services, and legal procedures prevents children from bearing the burden of recovery alone. These findings reinforce the view that the rehabilitation of child victims requires coordination between family-based care and formal services. Families become an extension of protection efforts when professional assistance decreases in intensity. Beyond practical assistance, instrumental support also represented the family's active involvement in the child's recovery process. Accompanying children to schools, counseling sessions, or legal institutions communicated that the child was not facing recovery in isolation. Such practices reduced feelings of vulnerability and strengthened emotional stability during periods of uncertainty. At the same time, the study found that limitations in economic resources constrained some families' ability to provide consistent instrumental support. Financial difficulties affected access to transportation, educational continuity, and professional services, thereby influencing the pace of social recovery. This demonstrates that the restoration of social functioning cannot be

separated from the material conditions surrounding the family environment.

Fourth, appraisal support rebuilds self-esteem. Child victims tend to internalize stigma and perceive themselves as damaged or worthless. Recognition, encouragement, and praise from family members help interrupt these negative self-evaluations. Moran & Taylor (2022) emphasize the importance of developing positive identities among children exposed to conflict, and the findings of this study confirm that appraisal support functions as an identity-building mechanism rather than merely as a complementary form of support. In practice, appraisal support encouraged children to reinterpret themselves not solely as victims, but as individuals capable of recovery, participation, and personal growth. Positive reinforcement from family members became particularly meaningful when children attempted to return to school, interact with peers, or participate in household responsibilities. Recognition of even minor progress strengthened motivation and reduced fear of social judgment. This finding indicates that appraisal support contributes not only to emotional well-being, but also to the reconstruction of social identity following victimization.

This study also identified contextual factors that moderate the quality of family support. Family economic conditions influenced the capacity to provide instrumental and material support. Parents' educational levels and awareness affected the quality of explanations and emotional sensitivity provided to children. Social norms and local stigma influenced children's willingness to reinitiate social interactions. In the local context of Bengkulu, these conditions interacted with still-limited social service systems, resulting in recovery burdens being placed more heavily on families than on formal institutional support. This situation is consistent with conditions in many regions of Indonesia, where child protection infrastructure at the district and municipal levels remains uneven (KPAI, 2025). Furthermore, the findings indicate that family support does not operate in isolation from broader social structures. The success or limitation of family support is closely connected to the accessibility of social services, the responsiveness of institutions, and community attitudes toward child victims. Families with stronger

access to professional assistance and supportive social environments were generally more capable of sustaining positive recovery processes.

Thus, this study offers a specific theoretical contribution. It does not merely confirm that family support is generally beneficial, but rather maps the pathways through which each dimension of support contributes to concrete indicators of social functioning within the context of family-based rehabilitation in Indonesia. This mapping has not been explicitly conducted in previous local-context studies, which generally discuss social support as a single construct without distinguishing its specific pathways (Saputri et al., 2019; Maslihah, 2011). The findings also suggest that social functioning recovery should be understood as a multidimensional process shaped by emotional, cognitive, practical, and identity-related mechanisms simultaneously. Each form of support interacts dynamically with the others, meaning that the absence of one dimension may weaken the overall recovery process experienced by the child.

Practically, these findings emphasize that child protection interventions should not end with case resolution or initial referral processes. Social workers need to assess family readiness, provide psychoeducation to caregivers, and monitor family communication patterns with child victims at home. Local governments should strengthen family-based rehabilitation programs, ensure access to trained professionals, and develop guidance modules for families caring for child victims involved in legal processes. Schools and communities also need to receive education and socialization to prevent the stigmatization of child victims when they return to performing their social roles. In addition, interventions should recognize families not merely as caregivers, but as central actors in the rehabilitation process. Strengthening family capacity therefore becomes a crucial strategy for supporting sustainable social recovery among child victims in conflict with the law.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that family social support plays a central role in restoring the social functioning of child victims in conflict with the law. Emotional, informational, instrumental, and

appraisal support are not isolated actions; rather, they work together to create a sense of security, understanding of the situation, practical protection, and self-esteem. When these forms of support are provided consistently, children are more likely to fulfill their basic needs, develop problem-solving capacities, and resume their social roles within the family, school, and community.

The academic contribution of this study lies in mapping the specific pathways between each dimension of social support and concrete indicators of social functioning within the context of family-based rehabilitation in Indonesia, a relationship that has rarely been explored empirically at the local level. This study demonstrates that children's recovery is shaped not only by professional assistance, but more importantly by everyday family interactions after children return home. Families may function as effective systems of protection; however, when support is weak, families may also become additional sources of vulnerability.

The practical implication of these findings is that social workers, psychologists, and local child protection institutions need to involve families more systematically in the recovery process. Family members require guidance regarding trauma-sensitive communication, appropriate information-sharing, practical assistance, and positive reinforcement. Local government institutions should strengthen family-based intervention models and ensure that local services possess adequate resources to assist child victims beyond the initial legal process. Concrete policy recommendations include: (1) the development of standardized family psychoeducation modules; (2) training for social workers using trauma-informed approaches; and (3) strengthening collaboration among Social Services agencies, schools, and local child protection institutions.

This study has several limitations. The number of informants was limited to nine individuals in Bengkulu City, meaning that the findings cannot be generalized to all contexts involving child victims in legal processes across Indonesia. The study also relied on the willingness of vulnerable informants to share their experiences, which may have limited the depth of certain narratives. Future studies are recommended to involve more socioeconomically and culturally diverse family samples, compare urban and rural contexts, and

examine the long-term outcomes of family-based rehabilitation. Further research may also explore the interaction between family economic status, parental education, local culture, school support, and types of legal cases in influencing the restoration of the social functioning of child victims.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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